

November 29, 2016

INCREASE AWARENESS, OBSERVE WORLD AIDS DAY

Free HIV Testing Events Offered December 1st

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Pensacola, Fla. – Since 1988, World AIDS Day has become one of the most recognized international health days and is a key opportunity to raise awareness, commemorate those who have passed on, and celebrate victories in the fight against HIV/AIDS—such as increased access to treatment and prevention services like Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). The local theme for World AIDS Day 2016 is Care-->Commitment-->Cure.

The following World AIDS Day events are free and open to the public. To promote awareness and prevent HIV from spreading in our community, the Florida Department of Health in Escambia County (FDOH-Escambia) collaborated with several partnering organizations to offer free testing at the two afternoon and evening World AIDS Day events.

World AIDS Day Event Schedule – Thursday, December 1st:

Rockstar Breakfast

WHERE: 5 Eleven Palafox
511 Palafox Street
Pensacola, FL

WHEN: 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. CST

WHAT: A special “thank you” event for HIV caregivers, case managers, and medical professionals. Space is limited. To reserve your spot, email noflacinfo@gmail.com.

Celebration in the Square

(Free HIV and Syphilis Testing Available)

WHERE: Seville Square
Downtown Pensacola, FL

WHEN: 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. CST

WHAT: An upbeat outdoor event celebrating advancements in the treatment of HIV/AIDS in the past 30 years.

World AIDS Day Evening Celebration

(Free HIV Testing Available)

WHERE: Bethel AME Church
511 Woodland Drive
Pensacola, FL

WHEN: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. CST

WHAT: Traditional World AIDS Day commemoration, including speakers ranging from State representatives to local politicians.

HIV infection can affect anyone and does not discriminate on basis of age, race, gender, or sexual orientation. The CDC estimates 1.2 million people in the United States are living with HIV infection, and almost one in eight (12.8 percent) of those people are unaware of their infection. Florida continues to rank among the top incidences of new HIV infections.

As of July 2016, there were 1,322 reported cases of persons living with HIV in Escambia County, Florida. The good news is that HIV is preventable and that treatment works, which is why it is so important to get tested, know your status, and prevent the spread of HIV.

What You Can Do to Prevent HIV and AIDS:

- Get tested and know your HIV and STD status.
- Limit your number of sex partners.
- Do not inject drugs.
- Practice safe sex and correct and consistent condom use.
- If you have HIV, get medical care, treatment, and supportive services to stay healthy and reduce your ability to transmit the virus to others.
- If you think you may have been exposed to HIV, obtain medical treatment.

FDOH-Escambia offers HIV testing in their STD clinic and provides assistance with HIV medications. There are several community HIV test sites that offer free rapid HIV testing with preliminary test results in as little as 20 minutes. For more information about HIV-related services in Escambia County, FL, please call 850-595-6345 or visit www.EscambiaHealth.com. Individuals may also request HIV testing through their physician.

To learn more about World AIDS Day, visit www.WorldAIDSDay.org.

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About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](http://PublicHealthAccreditationBoard.org), works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

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